

## *Governor John Lynch Honors Veterans on Memorial Day*

*From the Governor's speech at the NH Veterans Cemetery in Boscaawen:*

"Today, we celebrate our freedom by honoring the many people who have made that freedom possible.

Throughout our history, soldiers, sailors and airmen have made the ultimate sacrifice. They have paid the ultimate price so that we can be free – free to worship as we please, free to speak out against injustice, free to live without fear of oppression.

These are freedoms that some in this country take for granted, while there are many around the world yearning to relish these freedoms for just one day. Those who have served understand our freedom can never be taken for granted.

Today, we pay our respects to those who gave their lives for our country. We also take time to thank and stand with those who risked their lives on the battlefields, on the sea and in the air, as they remember the friends they have lost.

As I look at the faces of the many veterans gathered here today, as I look into your eyes, I see dedication, courage and pride. I see the memories of past battles. I see the memories of brothers and sisters in arms who made it home, and I see the tears for those who did not.

I see 18-, 19- and 20-year-olds, many leaving home for the first time to fight for what they believed in, fighting for their country, fighting for our freedom.

I see infantry soldiers who patrolled the tiny villages of Italy, who fought along the beaches at Normandy and secured the Remagen Bridge.

I see sailors who cautiously made their way across the Pacific, Marines waiting to land on Iwo Jima and Okinawa, and airmen who flew countless missions over "The Hump."

I see Marines braving a bitter cold, waiting to enter battle at the Chosin Reservoir, and young, battle-hardened troops who charged countless unnamed hills and pressed on to the 38<sup>th</sup> Parallel.

I see sailors, not far removed from high school, patrolling the Mekong Delta, and soldiers making their way through the jungles near the Cambodian border, and Marines at Khe Sanh.

I see the not too distant memories of the burning oil fields of Kuwait.

And I can see the dedication, the pride, the sacrifice, has been passed on to a new generation.

Today we look into the faces of our soldiers and see the memories of Fallujah and Baghdad, Kabul and Kandahar.

The names of the battlefields have changed; the purpose and the sacrifice have not.

Your faces tell the stories. Through your service to your country, you have seen so much. You have done all that was asked of you.

And when you talk about your service, your expressions show your pride, no different than the day you first put on that uniform.

Your eyes show the pain of fallen friends, forever young on the battlefields of Europe, Korea, Southeast Asia, the Middle East.

Throughout our nation's history, so many brave Americans have risked their lives, and given their lives so that we may be free.

For when their nation called, they answered. Whenever oppression, brutality and misery began to sweep across humankind, the men and women we honor today stepped forward to carry the banner of freedom. Our heroes stood up to ruthless dictators who wished to impose their will on innocent people who wished to be free.

They understood "life, liberty and the pursuit of happiness" are not just words, but rather ideals by which we live our lives. We can never repay the debt we owe to our fallen soldiers, our heroes. They have our eternal gratitude and they will never be forgotten. They made the ultimate sacrifice to uphold those ideals that we hold so dear.

On this Memorial Day, let us recommit to always honoring our service men and women, our veterans, and also their families. Without their sacrifice, we would not be able to enjoy our freedom. Let us always be there for them as they were there for us.

I am honored to join you today to remember those who have given their lives for our nation."



*Governor John Lynch spoke at the NH Veterans Cemetery on May 30, 2007.*